

ing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, MD. Today, the Housing Opportunities Commission is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its Family Self Sufficiency, FSS, program, which helps low-income families with section 8 housing vouchers or living in public housing meet their educational and employment goals. The Housing Opportunities Commission has established a wonderful program that provides resources to low-income families to help them find and retain employment along with the opportunity for families to put away savings. These savings allow families to pay for educational opportunities, transportation or even the purchase of a home. While many housing authorities operate Family Self Sufficiency programs, I believe that the Housing Opportunities Commission has done an extraordinary job of helping its residents achieve economic independence.

In the 10 years that the Commission has operated the Family Self Sufficiency program, almost 350 people have graduated and are well on their way to financial independence. These families faced significant barriers to gaining employment—33 percent were on welfare or were unemployed, many had no high school degree and 95 percent are single parents. Despite these obstacles, all 347 graduates have been able to retain stable employment, and 25 percent of the FSS graduates have purchased their own homes, a remarkable achievement.

The Housing Opportunities Commission, HOC, has been committed to this important program for 10 years. By providing intensive case management, opportunities for education and job training and assistance in finding and paying for child care, HOC has ensured that the families enrolled in FSS can make the transition from welfare to work a successful one.

In addition to working to better the lives of Montgomery County residents, the Housing Opportunities Commission has been a strong advocate for the program, helping me and others in Congress fight to continue and even expand the FSS program. In 1998, my colleagues and I fought to keep this program and thankfully, we were able to strengthen it by requiring that certain increases in income were disregarded for purposes of determining the amount of rent a family pays. Families who take part in FSS and increase their incomes are able to save money in an escrow account instead of paying more in rent. This is a great encouragement for families to find better employment, and it ensures that funds are available when necessary for emergencies. In addition, last year, I introduced legislation which would expand the program so that families living in project-based section 8 developments could also benefit from a housing agency's self-sufficiency programs.

The Family Self Sufficiency program is one that changes lives for the better, and that is evident when looking at

this year's participants in HOC's program. This year, 36 new families will graduate from the FSS program in Montgomery County, and I want to recognize the work that they have done to become self-sufficient. Ninety-two percent of these graduates have participated in education and/or job training courses and seven graduates have become homeowners.

These individuals are not only better positioned to participate in the job market, but they are providing stability for their families and models for their communities. The staff at HOC and the graduates of the FSS program, present, past, and future, are to be commended for their efforts.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill and joint resolution were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1446. An act to support the efforts of the California Missions Foundation to restore and repair the Spanish colonial and mission-era missions in the State of California and to preserve the artworks and artifacts of these missions, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 73. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM304. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin relative to a tax on Internet access; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 18

Whereas, the emergence of the Internet as a means of communication has profoundly influenced our society and will pave the way for the global marketplace; and

Whereas, Wisconsin is one of only 8 states that imposes a sales tax on Internet access, thereby putting Wisconsin companies that conduct business over the Internet at a competitive disadvantage; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Commerce has estimated that wealthy Americans are 20 times more likely to have Inter-

net access, while Hispanics and African Americans are far less likely to have Internet access; and

Whereas, there is a growing "digital divide" between those citizens able to access the technology of the new economy and those who cannot; and

Whereas, increased access to the Internet will create jobs and contribute to economic development; and

Whereas, taxing access to the Internet will make access to the Internet less affordable and therefore less available; and

Whereas, taxing Internet access contributes to this condition and unfairly burdens citizens who are least able to afford Internet access; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin legislature has previously voted to repeal the state's sales tax on Internet access thus demonstrating its commitment to making sure that Wisconsin is on the leading edge of this new technology and providing incentives for even more access and creative use of the Internet: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of the Wisconsin senate memorialize Congress to pass legislation that will immediately and permanently prohibit any state from imposing a tax on access to the Internet; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate chief shall provide a copy of this resolution to the governor, to each member of the Wisconsin congressional delegation, to the president and vice president of the United States, to each member of the president's cabinet, and to the secretary of the U.S. Senate and clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives.

POM-305. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Maine relative to the Head Start Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

POM-306. A concurrent resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Ohio relative to the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2003; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 6

Whereas, the human embryo is a living organism of the species *Homo sapiens* at the earliest stages of development (including the single-celled stage), and human cloning a human being at the embryonic stage of life and grows this new human being solely to be exploited ("reproductive cloning") or destroyed (so-called "therapeutic" cloning) through nontherapeutic research and experimentation; and

Whereas, human cloning is a manufacturing process in which a human being is created in a laboratory; human cloning indicates a utilitarian view in which a human being is created merely for usefulness with no respect for the dignity of that human being; and human cloning creates a human being who is the twin of a parent, has no other biological parent, and is the child of the grandparents, thereby causing serious moral, social, and legal issues; and

Whereas, current human cloning attempts pose a substantial risk of producing human beings with unpredictable but potentially devastating health problems; and

Whereas, such human cloning attempts are grossly irresponsible and unethical; and

Whereas, the United States House of Representatives passed the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2001, a complete ban, and the President of the United States has called for a complete human cloning ban; and

Whereas, a complete human cloning ban is achieved by the passage of the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2003 as introduced in the United States Senate by Senator SAM